

Admin move a must to ensure women's voting rights

Mahila Parishad leaders tell view exchange meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) leaders at a view exchange meeting yesterday stressed the need for administrative initiatives to ensure women's voting rights and their increased participation in Parliamentary election.

To establish women's representation in one-third seats in the Parliament and 40 percent representation in local government, it is important to improve the law and rights situation in the country. Because, terrorism and fraudulence in voting took place in every election since 1973, hindering

women's participation in election, said the leaders of the parishad. BMP organised the meeting at its office in the city.

The BMP leaders said the women in the country are facing various obstacles even while casting their votes. Their participation in Parliamentary election is quite

insignificant, whereas in election campaign the number of women is more.

It is important to conduct direct election in the reserve seats in the Parliament following the path of Union Parishad election, they suggested.

The speakers also said that motivation programmes should be taken by the government for enhancing women's participation in election.

While reading out the keynote paper, Kazi Sofia Akhter of the parishad suggested establishing an independent Election Commission Secretariat so that it might help take immediate actions.

The suggestions also include awareness programmes in mass media to ensure total participation of women and creating an environment free from terrorism and militancy.

"We just want a free and fair election that is free from the influence of black money and muscle power, where the patriotic people will be the candidates and a non-communal society will be formed," said General Secretary of the parishad Ayesha Khanam.

She also urged the authorities concerned to reform the political culture and to bring changes in electoral process.

The meeting was presided over by Selina Khalek, vice president of the central committee of BMP, while Masuma Khanam and Shanta Maria were also present.



Mahila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam speaks at a view exchange meeting at Mahila Parishad office in the city yesterday. On her right are Kazi Sofia Akhter and Masuma Khanam

Work on e-Library going on

Says UGC chairman

Speakers at a seminar titled "e-Library for the Universities" urged University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh to play the leadership role in building e-library in the universities, says a press release.

They also underscored the need for developing IT in all libraries of higher educational institutions. UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam in the seminar said, work on e-library is going on. He also said we are now trying to get fund through the World Bank for innovative research work from which we can enrich the e-library.

Prof Dr Javed I Khan of Kent State University, in his keynote speech, laid emphasis on digitalising all the books and journals and said that digital library should be one of the master service to the teachers, researchers and students.

Former Librarian of Dhaka University Dr Fazlul Alam observed time has come to hold consortium in small scale in some universities in the country.

A good number of IT specialists and professional librarians of both public and private universities of the country were present in the seminar held at UGC yesterday.

Powerful quake strikes Tibet

AFP, Beijing

A powerful earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale shook an uninhabited area of China's mountainous Tibetan region yesterday, an official with the Tibetan seismological bureau said.

The earthquake struck in Gaize county around 4:30 pm (0830 GMT) this afternoon, an official said. The quake was felt in the area.

"We have no staff stationed in this area as no people live there."

Class boycott, sit-in, human chain at DU

FROM PAGE 1
DU Teachers' Association (Duta) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former general secretary Prof Muhammad Akhtaruzzaman, Prof Sakawat Ali Khan, Prof Muhammad Samad, Prof MM Akash, Prof Shaikh Abdus Salam, Prof Shahadat Ali, Prof Giasuddin Mollah, Prof Dalem Chandra Bhowmik, Prof M Akhtaruzzaman, Prof Saiful Islam Khan, Prof Rahela Bano, Prof Nazma Shaheen, Mesbah Kamal, Rahmat Ullah, M Wahiduzzaman, Mofizur Rahman and Nadir Junayed were present among others.

Talking to the reporters, Prof Kabir Chowdhury said, "There is no logic in keeping the teachers and students detained."

Prof Kabir also observed that taking classes is not the sole duty of the teachers, to protest against any injustice is also the duty of a teacher. "If the teachers protested during the August incident, they performed it as their duty, for which they deserve reward, not punishment," he added.

The veteran professor observed that the university authorities should be active in their efforts to free the detained teachers and

Military edn for younger generation stressed

BSS, Savar

Quarter Master General of Bangladesh Army Lt Gen Mohammad Jahangir Alam Choudhury yesterday said military education for the younger generation along with academic learning is essential for the nation.

There is no alternative of discipline in building moral character in student life, he said this while inaugurating the annual training camp-2008 of Ramna Regiment, Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) at the BNCC Academy at Baipale.

GOC of Nine Infantry Division Maj Gen Ashab Uddin, Director of BNCC Brig Gen Kazi Anwar-Ul-Islam and high military and civil officials were present on the occasion.

Lt Gen Jahangir said the BNCC was built as the second line-up active force to protect the nation and country during foreign aggression and natural calamities along with the armed forces.

He said the motto of the BNCC is

to develop leadership quality among as a section of the younger generation to engage them for the welfare of the nation.

He referred to the outstanding humanitarian service rendered by the former and present members of the BNCC during the recent devastating cyclone and said such endeavours will also continue in future.

Lt Gen Jahangir said the BNCC cadetship is playing a vital role in making future leadership disciplined and pragmatic.

Describing women empowerment as an important demand of time, he said participation of women is increasing in every field of society. The participation of the women in the BNCC in a greater proportion will further accelerate the process of women empowerment, he added.

A total of 495 cadets, five BTFOs, six PUOs and two TUOs from 96 educational institutions of five battalions of Ramna Regiment are taking part in the training.



USAID Acting Country Director MM Kaiser Rashid, left, and Social Marketing Company Managing Director Perveen Rashid, right, hand over 60 lakh pieces of condom to Abdul Mannan, Director General of the Directorate of Family Planning, middle, at the latter's office at Karwan Bazar in the city on Sunday.

SEMINAR ON GLOBAL WARMING

Preparatory meet held at Bangabhaban

UNB, Dhaka

A preparatory meeting for a proposed seminar on global warming and its impacts was held with chief patron President Iajuddin Ahmed in the chair at Bangabhaban yesterday.

The meeting discussed various issues of the seminar, being held in the wake of adversities stemming from global warming reportedly due to excessive greenhouse gas emissions in the developed world.

Organisers said the aim of the seminar is to find out ways and formulate strategies as Bangladesh is going to be worst victim of the climate change amid global warming.

The proposed seminar will be organised jointly by Dhaka University and the Ohio State University of the United States.

Experts on global warming from 15 countries are likely to take part in the seminar while researchers and scientists present various papers on the hot issue of the time.

Secretaries concerned, vice-chancellors of different public universities and chairpersons of relevant departments attended the meeting.

During his US visit last year, Iajuddin presented a paper titled 'Bangladesh: Problems of Global Warming, Land Inundation and Arsenic Poisoning' at the Ohio State University.

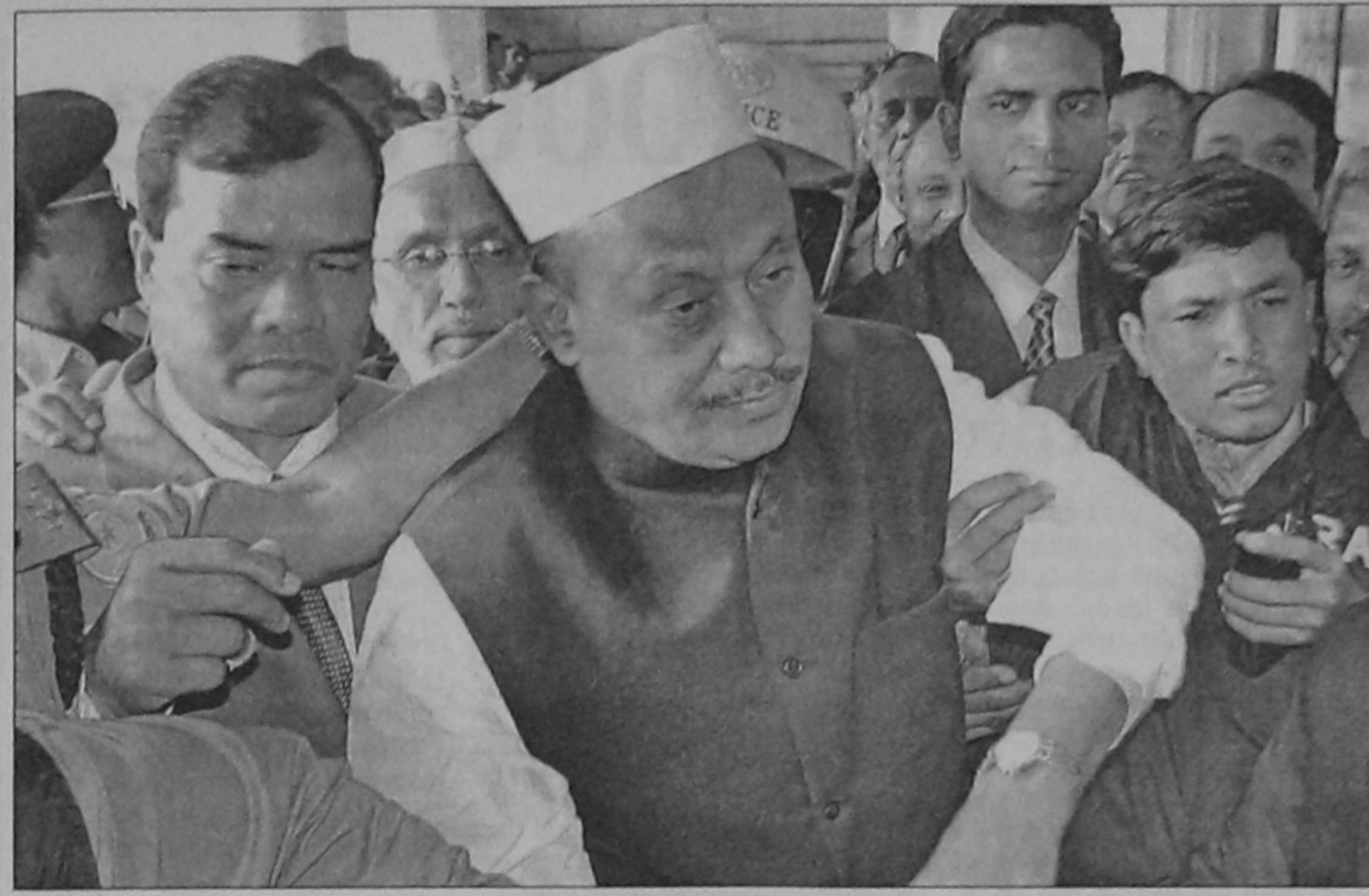
US soil-science experts then expressed their interest in cooperating in arranging such a seminar in Bangladesh. "The date of the seminar is yet to be fixed, but it is likely to be held in April or May this year," a source said.

WFP, Proshika distribute relief in Pirojpur

World Food Programme (WFP) and Proshika jointly distributed relief among 3823 families of five unions at Kaukhali upazila in Pirojpur recently, says a press release.

In the first phase of the relief operation each family was given 30kg of rice, 9kg of daal, 1kg of salt and 10 packets of high protein biscuits.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Pradip Raihan visited the relief centres while Proshika Director Mahbub Alam, Deputy Director Abdul Halim, Central Coordinator Abdur Rahim, magistrate engaged in relief operation, Proshika Divisional Coordinator Nigar Sultana and Area Coordinator Md Deloer Hossain were present.



Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury is being produced before a court in the port city yesterday in Bijoy TV scam case. (Story on Page-3)

6 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and nine others injured in separate road accidents at Sherpur and Rajshahi in the last two days.

Our Staff Correspondent in Bogra reports: Four people were killed and nine others injured in a road accident at Mirzapur at Sherpur in the district yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as truck driver Abdur Rahman, Habibur Rahman, Yakub Ali and Yusuf Ali. Three of the deceased died on the spot, while Yusuf Ali succumbed to his injuries at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Seven of the injured were rushed to the hospital as well.

Police said the accident took place at around 6:00am when the Bogra-bound truck from Chittagong lost control and fell into a roadside ditch.

Our RU Correspondent adds: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Charghat and Tanore upazila in Rajshahi in the last two days.

The deceased were identified as Muksd Mollah, 50, and Bagadi Mondol, 65.

A speeding motorcycle knocked Muksd down while he was crossing Charghat-Bhagha highway at

Kakramari under Charghat upazila at around 10:30am yesterday, leaving him seriously injured.

Local rushed him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries.

Local seized the motorbike but its owner managed to escape.

In another incident, a speeding truck knocked Bagadi Mondol down at Gokul crossing in Tanore on Tuesday.

He succumbed to his injuries on way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

However, the driver managed to escape with the truck.

Arsenic mitigation possible by fern, flower cultivation

Reveals research report

BSS, Dhaka

It is possible to mitigate arsenic from soil by cultivating fern and different types of flower plants in the arsenic-affected areas and such a practice will also help contain the arsenic contamination of crop produced on the same soil.

This was revealed in the report of a research conducted by Prof Dr SM Enamul Haq, chairman of the Department of Soil, Water and

Environment, Dhaka University.

Dr Haq, an eminent arsenic and soil pollution expert, told BSS that plants belonging to the fern category can absorb more than 95 percent to the total arsenic on the soil.

These easy-growing plants can be cultivated commercially and good results can be obtained by planting those around croplands.

Cultivation of different types of flowers can also mitigate arsenic contamination on soil, he added.

Dr Haq, who conducted the

research on arsenic for 10 years, said it is not right to irrigate vegetable fields with tube-well and deep tube-well water in arsenic affected areas. Pond and river waters can be used in those areas.

Use of organic materials, including cowdung, poultry manure and compost fertiliser can also reduce arsenic intake by plants. Arsenic intake can also be reduced by using more phosphorus-enriched fertilisers, the report said.



Sammita Sangkritik Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus speaks at a press conference at a city hotel yesterday. On his right are Selim Shamsul Huda Chowdhury and Manjarul Islam and on his left are Bishwajit Roy and Mahmud Selim. Poush Mela Udzapan Parishad organised the press conference.

Raise use of coal to cut gas consumption

FROM PAGE 16

In the Jamalganj Coalmine. The amount of proven reserve of underground coal is 884 million tonnes, the report said.

Development of coalmine is possible in Bangladesh like many other countries through underground as well as open pit mining, the handout quoting the report said.

But development of minefield is more complicated in the country due to the positions of coal reserves, special impact of geological formation and socio-economic as well as environmental reasons, it said.

This coal policy will be regarded as the integral part of the overall energy policy, the report said.

The targeted 8 percent GDP growth rate cannot be achieved with only the use of natural gas to generate electricity, said the review committee in its report.

According to the report, special

attention should be given on coal-based power plant to meet the increased demand for electricity. To ensure energy security in the next 50 years, there is no scope to export coal, rather it should be imported, it said.

Members of the review committee have visited the coal region and exchanged views with the locals, representatives of various professional bodies, journalists and experts with a view to finalising the coal policy.

Apart from this, the committee also reviewed people's opinion about the coal policy, received from websites and reports published in newspapers and journals.

Coal Bangla will work jointly with local or international, government or non-government institutions for expansion of the coal sector, the handout said, adding that it will also choose its joint partner on the basis of competition

by maintaining maximum transparency.

The coal sector development committee will fix coal royalty after reviewing coal royalties of different countries and, if needed, will change it from time to time.

Besides, the committee recommended inclusion of mineral science in the education curriculum at diploma and university levels to create skilled manpower to improve the coal sector.

Other recommendations include setting up of geological survey directorate, mineral resources development bureau and strengthening of the department of environment for improving the efficiency level.

The coal policy, the handout said, has kept the provisions of adequate compensation and rehabilitation for those, who will be affected due to the development of coalmine.

Huge explosives, phensidyl seized in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 12 kilograms of gunpowder, five kilograms of explosives and 65 bottles of phensidyl from Digholshingha village at Chowgachha in Jessore district yesterday morning.

Acting on a tip off, a team of Jessore camp of Rab-6 led by Captain Faisal raided the place and found the gunpowder, explosives and phensidyl bottles stuffed in sacks of radish, that were supposed to be loaded in a Jessore-bound truck.

The peddlers fled the scene sensing Rab presence.

The seized items were handed over to Chowgachha Police Station.

Valuables worth Tk 10 lakh looted in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted gold ornaments and cash worth around Tk 10 lakh from a residence in the port city's Pahartali area in the early hours of yesterday.

Sources said a gang of armed robbers numbering 10 to 12 broke into the residence of Manu Mian Sawdagar near Pahartali Bazar under Double Mooring Police Station at around 3:00am.

They looted 45 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 3 lakh in cash from the house holding the inmates of the residence at gunpoint and made away with the booty.



Prof Muniruzzaman made JU Pro-VC

UNB, Savar

Prof Mohammad Muniruzzaman, of Physics Department of Jahangirnagar University (JU) has been appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor of the university for next four years.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, who is also the chancellor of the university, has given him the appointment.

Prof Muniruzzaman joined his office yesterday.

Students

FROM PAGE 16

The court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani recorded Kabir's statement and set January 13 for the next hearing of the case.

During yesterday's hearing, the four accused teachers were permitted to sit down on a wooden bench in the dock of the courtroom.

The two DU students -- Dewan Safayet Ahmed and Ashraf Alam, witnesses of the case filed against four DU teachers and 15 students for violating the EPR in August last year, gave their judicial statements to him on September 5 last year when he was a magistrate, added Kabir.

The four accused teachers, currently in jail custody, are Prof Sadrul Amin, president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta), Prof Anwar Hossain, general secretary of Duta, Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, dean of Science Faculty and Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik, chairman of Applied Physics Department. One of the accused DU students, Moniruzzaman Sardar, was arrested earlier. He is currently in jail custody as well.

On August 22, a case was filed against some 5,000 unnamed students and teachers of DU and outsiders for violating the EPR, vandalising public and private properties, obstructing the police from discharging their duties, and assaulting law enforcers on the campus and its adjacent areas. However on September 9, the police pressed charges against four teachers and 15 students of DU for inciting violence on the campus and in the Shahbagh area on August 21 and 22.

Hearing of another case filed against the same accused is scheduled to be held today.



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